

*National Housing Act*

town of Levis, which has a population of 15,000—it is absolutely impossible to build a house for less than \$10,000.

Now, in the province of Quebec, average earnings being from \$65 to \$68 a week, the minister must realize that a large majority of workers are uneligible under the act, because they do not earn enough to meet their monthly mortgage payments, plus municipal and school taxes and other fixed charges. In fact,—I cannot remember just where I saw it, but I read somewhere—that, at the present time, 40 to 45 percent of Canadian families are barred from the benefits of this act.

I do not want to blame the minister for this,—and I repeat this in all sincerity—because I know the problem is not an easy one to solve, and I know too that he is doing the best he can, in co-operation with C.M.H.C. officials and employees, to find some way to help these people who, so far, have been deprived of certain benefits provided by the National Housing Act.

However, I hope he will allow me to put forward two suggestions that he might consider with his officials, if this has not already been done.

The first would be that people who apply for a direct loan from the corporation, and whose income is less than \$5,000 a year, be charged the same rate of interest as is required from limited dividend firms, namely 4½ per cent or 4⅝ per cent as has been the case since October 1958. This would substantially reduce the borrower's monthly payments.

The second suggestion would be to give financial help to municipalities for land servicing. I think I am in very good company in making this request, because if you look up *Hansard* for April 23 1956, you will find on page 3170 the following words spoken by the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Fleming), I quote:

It remains a fact, as we in this part of the house pointed out two years ago in the debates on the new bill, that the housing problem constitutes a very severe test of the financial strength of municipalities. There is still a lamentable dearth of serviced land, particularly in the areas of greatest need, and this is today the major bottleneck in the path of construction to meet the need.

The municipalities on whom the burden of providing services for land normally falls are literally at the end of their revenue resources. The federal government has within its power the solution of this serious and critical problem, but it continues to withhold that solution. It leaves the responsibility

[Mr. Bourget.]

to the provinces, which of course created the municipalities, and at the same time in large measure it continues to absorb their sources of taxation.

I affirm again as on previous occasions that the solution rests within the power of the federal government. The federal government is not coming forward with any solution of this problem, which is not going to be solved without remedial action on the part of the federal authorities. It is to be hoped that this type of action will come soon.

You see, Mr. Chairman, that as I said a moment ago, I am in good company, and I believe that the government should consider the possibility of assisting municipalities or recommend the passing of a municipal grants act under which the federal government would help the municipalities put in essential services. I think that one effect of such legislation would be to reduce in many cases the price of lands which, as the minister knows, is alarmingly increasing in some areas.

Mr. Chairman, I make those suggestions in good faith and I hope that the minister will give them special attention.

Before I sit down, I would like to point out once again to my hon. friends of the province of Quebec who sit on the government side, that we are always envious of the developments taking place in the other provinces through financial help from the federal government.

**Mr. Tremblay:** You are messing up your speech, my hon. friend.

**Mr. Habel:** Perhaps in so far as you are concerned.

**Mr. Bourget:** At the beginning of my remarks, I said that I would try to keep the discussion on the same level as the minister's statement, and I will not be swayed from my course by the interruptions of my hon. friend from Roberval (Mr. Tremblay).

**Mr. Tremblay:** You are on the wrong track.

**Mr. Bourget:** As the minister knows, under sections 23 and 36 of the present legislation, we also in the province of Quebec have an opportunity to take advantage of what is offered under those two same sections to any of the other provinces and of which the province of Ontario especially has taken advantage to so large an extent.

Only one project has been accepted by the government of our province, and that is the one commonly called the Dozois plan. I therefore urge my hon. friends to make new representations to the premier of our province